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RETAIL PRICES AND BASIC WAGE RATES - DECEMBER QUARTER, 1962

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The Consumer Price Index measures quarterly for each capital city separately the variations in prices of commodities and services as affecting a high proportion of the expenditure of wage-earner households. Commodities and services included in the index are food, clothing, drapery, home ownership, rent of privately owned and government owned houses, fuel, light, household appliances and supplies, fares, motoring, tobacco, cigarettes, beer, cinema, radio and television licenses, newspapers, postal and telephone services, hairdressing, dry cleaning, and various other items.

The various commodities and services have been combined into groups, and group indexes are available for Food, Clothing and Drapery, Housing, Household Supplies and Equipment, and Miscellaneous.

The indexes measure price movements in each city individually. They do not provide a comparison of the retail price level in any city with the retail price level of any other city. The base of the index for each capital city and for the weighted average, six capitals, is year 1952-53 = 100.0. Group indexes also have separate bases for each group.

The Consumer Price Index for Brisbane rose from 127.5 in September quarter to 127.6 in December quarter, 1962, an increase of 0.1 per cent. compared with an increase of 0.2 per cent. in the previous quarter. Retail prices during the past twelve months have been fairly steady, the increase in the index from December quarter, 1961, to December quarter, 1962, being only 0.4 per cent., compared with 1.6 per cent. during the preceding twelve months and 3.6 per cent. in 1960.

The Food Group index showed little movement (0.2 per cent. increase) in the latest quarter, the index rising from 129.3 in September quarter to 129.5 in December quarter. Higher prices for meat were partially offset by price decreases for eggs, potatoes, onions and soft drinks.

The Clothing and Drapery Group index increased by 0.1 per cent. from 116.9 to 117.0 during the quarter. Small rises in piecegoods and women's footwear items were responsible for the increase.

There was a rise of 0.6 per cent. in the Housing Group index. The index increased from 143.2 in September quarter to 144.1 in December quarter, and this increase was attributable to higher house rentals.

The Household Supplies and Equipment Group index decreased from 113.1 to 112.8 during the quarter, a fall of 0.3 per cent. Price decreases for lawnmowers and soap powders and an increase in the price of gas were the main variations in this group since the previous quarter.

An increase from 134.3 to 134.4 was recorded in the Miscellaneous Group index during the quarter, being a rise of 0.1 per cent. A number of items in this group showed small price increases.

In December quarter the Consumer Price Index rose slightly in Sydney, Brisbane, and Hobart, remained unaltered in Melbourne and Adelaide, and decreased in Perth. Percentage variations from September quarter were as follows:- Hobart, +0.5; Sydney, +0.4; Brisbane, +0.1; and Perth, -0.3. The weighted average for the six capital cities showed an increase of 0.1 per cent. from September to December quarters.

Since the base year, 1952-53, the rise in the retail price level has been greatest in Hobart and Brisbane, while the smallest increase has occurred in Perth. Percentage increases from 1952-53 to December quarter, 1962, were as follows:- Hobart, 28.2; Brisbane, 27.6; Melbourne, 26.2; Sydney, 23.2; Adelaide, 21.9; and Perth, 21.7, while the weighted average for the six capitals was 24.4 per cent. (It should be noted that these figures merely indicate rates of price rise in the separate cities, and do not represent in any way the relative absolute price levels in the different cities.)

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE BASIC WAGE RATES

Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are reviewed by the appropriate Industrial Authorities from time to time - in some cases at fairly regular intervals and in others as a result of special applications for variation of the wage rate. The last variation made by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was an addition of 12s. to the male basic wage, with corresponding adjustments to the female and juvenile rates, and operated from 7th July, 1961.

The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961 abolished automatic quarterly reviews of the State basic wage, but the Industrial Commission was empowered to vary the wage after a general hearing on the applications of interested parties. The last variation to the basic wage made by the Commission was an increase of 4s. for males and 3s. for females operative from 29th May, 1961. An application from employees' organisations for a general review of the State basic wage was refused in a judgment given by the Industrial Commission on 20th December, 1962. A hearing has now been requested of an application from employees' organisations seeking a variation consequent upon changes in the Consumer Price Index since May, 1961.

Current Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are shown in the following table.

Basic Wage Rates - Australian Capital Cities

Capital City	Commonwealth Basic Wage			State Basic Wage		
	Males	Females	Date of Operation	Males	Females	Date of Operation
				£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	.. 13 10 0	10 2 6	7.7.61	14 4 0	10 13 0	29. 5.61
Sydney ..	.. 14 15 0	11 1 0	7.7.61	15 1 0	11 6 0	1. 2.63a
Melbourne ..	.. 14 7 0	10 15 0	7.7.61	14 7 0	10 15 0	July, 61b
Adelaide ..	.. 14 3 0	10 12 0	7.7.61	14 3 0	10 12 0	10. 7.61a
Perth ..	.. 14 8 0	10 16 0	7.7.61	14 18 9	11 4 1	30.10.61
Hobart ..	.. 14 14 0	11 0 6	7.7.61	14 14 0	11 0 6	July, 61b

a From the first pay period commencing on or after the date shown.

b Most Wages Boards adopted the Commonwealth rate during July, 1961.

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5th February, 1963

Consumer Price Index - Total and Group Indexes - Brisbane
(Year 1952-53 = 100.0)

Period	Food	Clothing and Drapery	Housing	Household Supplies and Equipment	Miscellaneous	All Groups	
Year -							
1952-53	..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
1953-54	..	103.4	100.9	101.6	101.7	102.0	
1954-55	..	104.1	101.3	104.7	102.5	102.9	
1955-56	..	107.7	102.2	110.5	102.6	106.3	
1956-57	..	111.5	104.7	118.4	106.5	112.0	
1957-58	..	113.0	107.8	123.9	108.3	114.4	
1958-59	..	119.8	109.4	128.4	109.0	118.2	
1959-60	..	124.2	111.9	132.6	110.6	121.2	
1960-61	..	130.4	115.1	137.6	111.3	125.4	
1961-62	..	130.8	116.7	140.5	113.0	127.3	
Quarter -							
1961 - December	..	129.7	116.7	140.2	112.9	127.1	
1962 - March	..	131.4	116.8	140.3	113.2	127.7	
June	..	129.4	116.8	141.9	113.0	127.3	
September	..	129.3	116.9	143.2	113.1	127.5	
December	..	129.5	117.0	144.1	112.8	127.6	
Percentage Increase or Decrease (-) on Previous Quarter							
Quarter -							
1961 - December	..	-2.1	0.3	0.4	-0.1	2.5	0.1
1962 - March	..	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5
June	..	-1.5	-	1.1	-0.2	-	-0.3
September	..	-0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1	-	0.2
December	..	0.2	0.1	0.6	-0.3	0.1	0.1

Consumer Price Index - Capital Cities
(Year 1952-53 = 100.0 for Each City and for Six Capitals)

As the base for each city is 100.0, the indexes in the table below do not indicate relative price levels as between cities, but they may be used to compare relative price movements in the various cities.

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average, Six Capitals
Year -							
1952-53	..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54	..	101.6	102.0	102.0	102.3	103.0	105.0
1954-55	..	102.3	102.0	102.9	103.5	105.2	104.9
1955-56	..	105.7	108.1	106.3	106.9	107.9	110.2
1956-57	..	112.9	114.0	112.0	111.1	112.9	116.9
1957-58	..	114.5	114.4	114.4	111.9	113.6	117.0
1958-59	..	115.3	116.6	118.2	114.5	114.7	118.7
1959-60	..	117.8	120.0	121.2	118.0	116.9	120.8
1960-61	..	122.1	125.9	125.4	122.9	121.2	127.5
1961-62	..	122.6	126.3	127.3	122.5	121.6	128.1
Quarter -							
1961 - December	122.5	126.5	127.1	122.5	121.3	128.3	124.3
1962 - March	..	122.4	125.9	127.7	122.1	121.5	127.5
June	..	122.3	125.9	127.3	121.9	121.8	127.5
September	..	122.7	126.2	127.5	121.9	122.1	127.6
December	..	123.2	126.2	127.6	121.9	121.7	128.2